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M E E T T H E P R E S S
Produced by Lawrence E. Spivak

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GUEST: Senator Kenneth B. Keating
Republican of New York

PANEL: David Kraslow, Miami Herald
Clark Mollenhoff, Cowles Publications
Charles Bartlett, Chicago Sun Times
Ray Scherer, NBC News

MODERATOR: Ned Brooks

MR. BROOKS: This is Ned Brooks, inviting you to MEET
THE PRESS.

(Announcement)

MR. BROOKS: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is
Senator Kenneth Keating, Republican of New York, who has been
one of the most persistent critics of the President's policy

on Cuba. We will start the questions now with David Kraslow of the Miami Herald.

MR. KRASLOW: Senator Keating, you have accused the Kennedy Administration in the past of being less than candid with the American people with respect to the situation in Cuba. The record of what occurred last fall seems pretty clear and perhaps it can best speak for itself, but I ask you now, sir, do you have any evidence indicating that since the first of the year the Administration or any of its officials have been less than honest with the American people?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, first, Mr. Kraslow, I want to correct you on saying "less than honest." I have never accused anyone in the Administration of not being honest or of being untruthful. I did say last fall that the American people were not being given all of the facts with regard to Cuba. I think more of the facts have been given now and certainly in the report of the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee, which was issued last week, a great many facts were given, some that had not been given by the Administration, so that I think that the American people have a reasonably good idea now of what is going on in Cuba.

MR. KRASLOW: Where do you stand now, sir, with respect to the Kennedy Administration on the Soviet strength in Cuba?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I agree with the report of the

Senate Preparedness Subcommittee, except they went further in their figures than I had ever gone. They said there were at least 17,500 troops there and they referred to reports that there were a good many more than that. The figure I have been using is that there are at least 17,000 there. I am sure that there are that number and I think that the makeup of this Senate Preparedness Subcommittee running all the way -- not only in both parties, was it unanimous, but the entire spectrum of political opinion was represented all the way from Senator Thurmond to Senator Jackson and Symington on the Democratic side and all the way from Senator Goldwater to Senator Margaret Chase Smith and Senator Saltenstall on the Republican side, so I think that -- and of course they went much further than any statements I have ever made about the Russian buildup in Cuba.

MR. KRASLOW: Well, Senator, when the President said recently there had been a net reduction of between four and five thousand troops in Cuba, you challenged this statement by saying that several thousand had left and several thousand had come in.

Now the Stennis Report says that all of our intelligence chiefs say that the President was correct, there was a net reduction of several thousand. Do you now accept this statement?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I call your attention to the

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fact that you have just given a part of the Stennis report. The Stennis report says although some have gone out, there are still at least 17,500 in Cuba and that is the figure -- the figure 17,000 is the one I have been using, but they go much further, Mr. Kraslow, in stating the number of troops than I have and my reason for not going as far as they did in this official report is that in all of my statements, not only with regard to troops but with others, I have taken the more modest figure because I felt that was the safer one to use in all of these cases.

MR. KRASLOW: Do you now accept the President's statement of a net withdrawal of between four and five thousand troops in the first part of this year?

SENATOR KEATING: No, I don't, nor does the Committee. The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee does not accept that and I do not accept it. I do not, however, want to charge the President with not giving us the facts. It is very difficult to tell the exact number of troops there. The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee recognized that. I recognize it, and the difficulty may be in semantics. If you consider everybody who is going out as troops, and everybody who is coming in as farmers and technicians, perhaps you could come to the idea that there had not been as many come in as had gone out, but the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee has unanimously found that the figure is now "at least" as they

put it, 17,500. They differ with some of the statements of the President in that regard, but I am sure that they know more than I would charge the President with any intentional falsification of those figures.

MR. BROOKS: We will be back with MEET THE PRESS and more questions for our guest, Senator Kenneth Keating, but first, this message.

(Announcement)

MR. BROOKS: And now resuming our interview, our guest today is Senator Kenneth Keating, Republican of New York, a vigorous critic of the Administration's policy on Cuba. You have just met David Kraslow of the Miami Herald. Our other reporters today are Clark Mollenhoff of the Cowles Publications, Charles Bartlett of the Chicago Sun Times, and Ray Scherer of NBC News.

Lawrence E. Spivak, permanent member of the MEET THE PRESS panel, will be back with us next week.

We will continue the questions now with Mr. Mollenhoff.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Senator Keating, do you consider the Stennis Report this last week as a general support of your viewpoint?

SENATOR KEATING: Oh, very definitely, except that they went much further than I did, Mr. Mollenhoff, in some of the statements they made about the Russian buildup

in Cuba.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: They stated the Intelligence Community generally would be responsible for whatever errors were made. They would seem to excuse higher level officials in the Administration. Would you agree with that assessment by the Stennis Committee?

SENATOR KEATING: No, I wouldn't agree with that completely. I have a very high regard for Mr. McCone, the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency who is the Chairman of the so-called Intelligence Community, and I point out that the report indicates that he warned in August of the possibility of a missile buildup in Cuba.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Do you feel that the responsibility is in the White House itself?

SENATOR KEATING: I don't know where the responsibility is and I would prefer to look at the future rather than the past. I do think that the responsibility lay in fields other than the Intelligence Community, although I concede as they do that there were some mistakes made in intelligence.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Well, now, you stated a little while ago that you had not challenged the honesty of the Administration in any respect, except on the Senate floor you did make several speeches, one of which included some quotations from Secretary of Defense McNamara, in which you quoted him as

saying that there was no evidence that Cuba had been used as a basis for subversion in Latin America.

Now how do you feel about that now? It seemed to me you were quite critical of the statement and felt it was wrong.

SENATOR KEATING: If there is any exception to my statements that would be the one. I was absolutely flabbergasted when I watched his television interview in which he said there had been no export of subversion from Cuba to Latin American countries, which I had stated a few days before, and much of my information had come from Latin American Ambassadors in Washington. And before that, Assistant Secretary Martin had testified to that -- his testimony wasn't released until later, and two or three days later the President said there was increasing evidence and eight days later Mr. McCone testified to that, and I don't understand that statement by the Secretary.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Why would this take place? Does this mean the Secretary of Defense isn't informed or do you feel he was misleading people?

SENATOR KEATING: I would not charge him with misleading people. His answer to that question is inexplicable to me. I do not know the reason for it and he has never made any effort, so far as I know, to clarify his position on that. Everybody knows, and knew then there was an increasing

export of subversion from Cuba to other Latin American countries.

MR. BARTLETT: Sir, I think a lot of people would be interested in learning how the Keating "Intelligence Agency" got into business. You said in the past that you get your intelligence from the same sources as the President. Now he gets his from CIA Director John McCone. Do you get yours from McCone or some authorized substitute for McCone?

SENATOR KEATING: I will say this to you, Mr. Bartlett, that all the information that I have received and have ever used as opposed to much information which I have received which I have not used, has come from either one of two sources, (1) government sources or (2) other sources later confirmed by official government sources, and most of it was directly from official government sources. By that I do not mean the top. I do not mean Mr. McCone.

MR. BARTLETT: Now there is a thesis that you could serve a more valuable function by divulging the individuals who would be willing to -- unauthorized channels -- leak security information, even to a Senator. Some people feel this is quite detrimental. Whereas in your case it serves a purpose for you, but it could hurt the nation.

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I am sure it has not hurt the nation. I think the nation has been served by expediting the bringing out of the facts with regard to Cuba and I would not reveal the names of these dedicated and patriotic people

in government who have given me this information. I think that would be a disservice to them and would result in injury to fine, patriotic Americans.

MR. BARTLETT: Well, now last fall when you were making these statements warning of the buildup in Cuba, on October 10 you said construction has begun on at least a half dozen launching sites for intermediate range missiles. On October 23 you said that the government's insistence we did not know about these missile sites until Tuesday, October 12, is incredible.

In the Stennis report that came out this week they make the point that during the week you were issuing these warnings there was a great volume of unconfirmed reports and rumors from human sources about strategic missile related activity in Cuba. None of these reports were confirmed prior to October 14, 1962. It is evident that many of these reports in fact referred to the SA-2 missile which though nowhere near the size of the strategic missiles later identified, still appear large to the untrained observers.

Doesn't this illustrate the kind of error you can fall into by relaying partial intelligence?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I think the fact is and the answer to it is that it was not an error. It was accurate information, and later proved to be accurate. People know the difference between the different kinds of missiles and

what I said on October 10, later developed to the the fact completely. The information came to me early in October. I checked it out thoroughly by informed government officials in whom I had confidence and I spoke therefore on the 10th of October, and what I said on that date later proved to be 100 percent accurate.

MR. BARTLETT: This Committee says that none of these reports were confirmed prior to October 14. You were talking on October 10.

SENATOR KEATING: That is right. I suppose what they mean by "confirmed" is that the official intelligence community sitting down and agreeing on what had taken place did not actually reach their conclusion until October 14, and I have not said at any time that the information which I had came from the official intelligence community -- in quotes -- it came from informed intelligence people who knew what they were talking about and the facts have borne them out.

MR. SCHERER: Senator Keating, Cuba seems to be on the back burner at the moment. Haiti is the top area of concern in the Caribbean. What would you say are the chances of a Russian-Cuba style takeover in Haiti?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I think there is danger of it. I think there are five or six or more countries in the Caribbean and Latin and Central America that create great problems and where there might be a Communist takeover. We

must not permit that. There are about 30,000 Haitians in Cuba who go back and forth. It is only a few miles away. And there could be a method of getting Communists back and forth there in that way. Some of them could be that kind of operators. I don't know of the existence of a direct Communist effort emanating from Cuba to Haiti, but I think it is something very much to be on the alert about.

MR. SCHERER: You are of the view that the OAS should actively intervene in Haiti?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I think the exact situation we have to face up to, I think we should put this up to the OAS, and seek their collaboration with us in what is to be done about Haiti. You almost have to decide that question from day to day because the situation changes so fast. Duvalier, the is a tyrant, a despot and should be gotten rid of, but when we are getting rid of him, we have to be careful there isn't a Communist takeover of the island as there was when we got rid of Batista.

MR. SCHERER: Should we help get rid of Mr. Duvalier?

SENATOR KEATING: I think that --

MR. SCHERER: Are we helping?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I don't think we ought to get into the question of whether we are helping on this program. but I think that he is a tyrant, he is unpredictable, nobody

diplomacy and everything short of military, in an effort to get someone else in there who is more responsible than this man.

MR. KRASLOW: Senator Keating, getting back to the question of your sources of information, have you ever unintentionally misled the American people in some of the Cuban information you have put out? Have you been right all the time?

SENATOR KEATING: So far as I know I have been right all of the time, and I believe it has been confirmed either by statements of the Administration or by this Senate Preparedness Subcommittee report, which, perhaps I should elaborate and say, went much further in their statements. They set forth a much more serious situation there than I ever have. But I think if I have erred, it has been on the side of understatement.

MR. KRASLOW: Well, you said earlier this year, I believe, that you had evidence that a submarine base was being constructed in Cuba. There is no evidence of this in the Stennis report. Do you still think there is a base being constructed there?

SENATOR KEATING: I said that reports had come to me of the building of a submarine base there. I have asked about that on a number of occasions. I have always been told officially that they do not have evidence of it. The reports still come. I have never stated it as a fact because I do not have it as a fact, but I still get reports of it,

they persist, and the official position of our Intelligence Community is it does not exist.

MR. KRASLOW: Are you satisfied with the Administration's actions with respect to Cuba today? Is there something the Administration should be doing that they are not doing?

SENATOR KEATING: I think so. I want to give credit where credit is due. I do see, since early February, somewhat of a stiffening in the position of our government and I commend them for it. There are a number of things that have been done. One important thing is this broadcast in Russian to the Russian troops that are there, which has stopped at one time and I protested and it has now been started again.

There are a number of the proposals which I made of an economic character of February 8 to the President through Mr. McCone which have in part or in whole been adopted.

Now I do think that more should be done. I think there should be a greater sense of urgency in dealing with our OAS and NATO allies in trying to get them to see this problem the way we do. And one danger is to understate the problem, because that is difficult to get them to see the seriousness of it if they don't think that we see the seriousness of it.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Senator Keating, you have indicated here that your reports in many of these cases came from subordinates in the federal government. Is it your feeling, then, that they did not get up to the level of McCone, or that they were stopped at some level there and didn't get to the President?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, first, let me point out to you there are many intelligence sources other than in the CIA. Secondly, I do not know, Mr. Mollenhoff, where the gap came, if you call it that. I just do not know.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: You are the one who said it didn't get through in some respect or another and I was wondering if at this stage, after six months, you had some conclusion as to why it didn't get through.

SENATOR KEATING: No.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Is there someone soft on communism? Do you have any feeling of this kind or do you feel it is just a mistake?

SENATOR KEATING: I would not charge that. I have no evidence upon which I could make such a charge. I do not know where the difficulty came and I do not know, of course, what was on the President's desk or on the desks of others in the executive branch.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Well now the whole Cuba matter started, of course, when Castro took over under a prior administration and there have been some hearings before some committees that

you have had some association with where there have been indications that material did not get to the top, to President Eisenhower, Dulles and Herter. Do you feel that situation exists, today? The same kind of a situation?

SENATOR KEATING: I cannot say but I do --

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Are you concerned about it?

SENATOR KEATING: I certainly am and I take this opportunity to say to you, because of some of the statements that have been made, that six times during the Eisenhower Administration I spoke out about the menace in Cuba. I recognized it and spoke first on July 14, 1959, and I considered it then a great menace and I do today, and increasingly so.

MR. BARTLETT: On the question of the accuracy of these reports in January, didn't you say that the concrete launching pads for these intermediate missiles were still in place and had not been dismantled?

SENATOR KEATING: I point out the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee went way beyond what I said about that. I said they could get their missiles back into operation in a matter of days. The Senate Preparedness Subcommittee unanimously said they could get them back into operation in a matter of hours. In other words, they went way beyond anything I said in that regard.

MR. BARTLETT: You mean if they were still on the island?

SENATOR KEATING: Yes. They said they could have the

operational -- if the missiles were there. I never said they were there. I don't know whether they are there. The subcommittee doesn't know. They say they don't. The intelligence community thinks they have been removed. But they do say that if they are there they can be operational within a matter of hours, which is way beyond anything that I have ever said.

MR. BARTLETT: But if you don't have any important dissent with the administration's policy on Cuba as it is now being carried out, I don't quite understand where you find the value of making public assertions on the situation in Cuba.

SENATOR KEATING: Well, you misunderstood me. I do have dissent in that I do not feel they are yet taking the steps that are necessary to remove the Russian weapons and soldiers from Cuba. Not all the steps.

I presented a fourteen point program of economic pressures to the President on the 8th day of February, and some of those steps have been taken. There are a great many that have not been. I think that stronger efforts should be made with our allies of the OAS and NATO to get them to see the seriousness of this situation and to get them to take some of the steps which I included in that program of economic pressures.

MR. BARTLETT: But you couldn't starve the Russians out of Cuba without a total blockade and as I understand it you don't favor that. Do you?

SENATOR KEATING: I do not favor that and I do not agree that

you could not get them to give up their Cuban base with anything short of a blockade. I think that if 12 of the 14 points that I recommended were vigorously pursued that it would result in the Russians deciding that they could not maintain their military, economic and political base in Cuba and would give it up.

Now we haven't taken all of these steps. I am not sure that that is the right answer, but I do think we have got to formulate a program, a firm program, and then carry it out.

MR. BROOKS: We have about three minutes.

Mr. Scherer --

MR. SCHERER: Senator Keating, have any recent events modified your view that Nelson Rockefeller is the leading Republican candidate for President?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, I still think he is the leading candidate. Recent events have certainly been much in the public eye.

MR. SCHERER: Have they changed his attractiveness to the Republican Party at large, do you think?

SENATOR KEATING: I have said that I think that since he declined to comment on the political implications of his recent marriage, it would be inappropriate for me as his Senator to do so.

MR. SCHERER: Do you agree -- if I may pursue this one

point further -- with the Goldwater view that the king makers are now gathering around Mr. Romney?

SENATOR KEATING: No, I don't. I think there are a number of attractive candidates for President and I don't think the king makers are gathering around any one candidate. I disagree with Senator Goldwater completely on that.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Senator Keating, you were on the House Judiciary Committee sometime ago investigating Truman tax scandals and you have been quite a commentator on conflicts of interest. There is a little problem today involving Mr. Roswell Gilpatric, Deputy Secretary of Defense, who was a lawyer for the General Dynamics Corporation and who subsequently handled some matters in the Defense Department.

Do you feel he should have withdrawn from handling anything on this TFX case? How do you feel about that?

SENATOR KEATING: I suppose my feelings are in part colored by my knowledge that Roswell Gilpatric is an honest man. I am sure he is. He bears a very high reputation and I can not bring myself to charge him with any conflict of interest. I think perhaps he would have been less embarrassed if he had completely withdrawn.

MR. MOLLENHOFF: Well, Senator, leaving aside the question of your personal knowledge, and the fact that Roswell Gilpatric is a New York lawyer, what about the principle involved of the individual who is a lawyer for a big corporation coming

into government and then having a role in handling a contract in which that corporation is involved?

SENATOR KEATING: Well, if he --

MR. MULLENHOFF: Do you feel he should have withdrawn?

SENATOR KEATING: If he has completely severed his connection with his law firm and is out of it completely, that raises the question which I have been hammering at that we should lay down the rules on it. Now you can argue it either way and I could accept either view as long as there was a rule. I think it is less embarrassing to him if he declines in any way to have anything to do with it.

MR. BROOKS: Gentlemen, I am sorry to have to interrupt but I see that our time is up. Thank you very much, Senator Keating, for being with us. I will tell you about next week's guest on MEET THE PRESS after this message.

(Announcement)

THE ANNOUNCER: For a printed copy of today's interview sent ten cents in coin and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Merkle Press, 809 Channing Street, N. E., Washington 18, D. C.

MR. BROOKS: Next week our guest on MEET THE PRESS will be the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Muhammad Zafrulla Khan. He will preside as the Assembly begins a special session next week. Now this is Ned Brooks saying goodbye for Senator Kenneth Keating and MEET THE PRESS.

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